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MENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

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DELIVERED AT THE

Susquehanna Female College,

FEBRUARY 6. 1861.

BY REV. D. H. FOCHT, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH, NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA.

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LB41
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Published by request.

In Exchange
Peabody Inst. of Balto.
June 14 1927

Address.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The beginning of most things is on a low scale. This is true of the vegetable and of the animal kingdom, of the kingdom of mind — true of the whole universe of created things. The parts of things may all be present in the germ, but all these parts are susceptible of advancement, of growth, of development, or of change. This law pervades the mental as well as the physical world. Some things, as those of the vegetable and brute creation, admit of improvement in a particular sphere and to a particular degree ; but when they have reached the *status* prescribed by the Creator, they will begin to fall back to their original state. Deterioration begins where progress ceases. This is also the case with the material part of man, bating the resurrection of his body. But it is not so with the immortal mind in its normal state. From its susceptibility of indefinite improvement in time, we may infer that the soul will continue to make advancement in knowledge, and progress in the development of all its powers, through all eternity. “For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” If the mind, then, is susceptible of such illimitable development, what grandeur and dignity invest it, and what boundless fields of knowledge from the cradle onward through eternity lie open

to its intelligent inspection! The universe of worlds, of suns and stars, as well as the mote in the sunbeam,—the display of creative Omnipotence as well as the laws by which worlds are governed,—will all afford material for the exercise of the immortal mind, and fill it with adoring praise and gratitude to God and unbounded joy in its own god-like existence.

But though the mind is susceptible of such vast and illimitable development in our present state of existence, it is only by close and constant application that its powers are brought into exercise and knowledge is obtained. Hence, on this occasion, our theme is:

Perseverance in study the only way to the attainment of knowledge.

1. It matters not what our advantages or circumstances in life may be, if we would know we must study. Knowledge cannot be conferred; it must be sought and acquired. Let no one think that he can gain knowledge without labor; knowledge is the reward of labor.

Knowledge is *not inherited*. However much our parents or friends may know, if we would know we must labor as though they knew nothing; To this rule there is no exception. Riches and many other things, for which we labored not, may become ours by inheritance. But knowledge must be acquired by our own industry. Here each one must labor for himself. Here all are on equal footing, and all have an equal chance, by close application, of attaining a respectable position. No one is excluded from gaining possession of this inestimable prize; but no one, who will not incessantly toil and labor, will ever come in possession of it, no matter what

his circumstances in life may be. Knowledge is the result of severe mental labor, and inseparably connected with it. On this subject let no one deceive himself. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." As certainly as "in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread", so certainly shalt thou in the exercise of *thy* brain attain knowledge. But mark the distinction: others may labor for your bread, whilst for knowledge you must labor yourself. So far, then, as your mental attainments are concerned, you have by your own exertion made of yourself what you are; and if you would make still higher attainments it must be by your own efforts.

No fortuitous combination of *favorable circumstances* can serve as a substitute for hard mental labor in the acquisition of knowledge. Good training in the family, plenty of good books, educated society, good schools and competent teachers, are all invaluable aids and cannot be appreciated too highly. Still, without mental exercise and labor on our part, all these advantages will avail us nothing. Not he who has the best and most opportunities gains most knowledge; on the contrary, he it is who thinks most, observes closest, and studies hardest. In fact, the want of advantages seems, in some persons, only to kindle desire into a passion for knowledge. This is true of those especially who would be and know something. On the contrary, he who will not apply his mind and think for himself will always remain a dolt, no matter how propitious the circumstances that surround him. But we are happy to say, that

no one need drag out a life in ignorance. In an age and a free country like ours, we may congratulate ourselves that the high-way to knowledge, though laborious, is open and free to all who would walk in it. Here the most disfavored may vie with the most favored and outstrip him in the race. Favorable circumstances without studying have never made a scholar; but close and continued application, though in unfavorable circumstances, must result in a glorious harvest of knowledge.

The possession of great natural *talents*, without diligent study, will not avail us so far as knowledge is concerned. It is admitted of course, that the possession of such talents is a great blessing and that, other things being equal, the possessor of them has a great advantage over others not so highly gifted. Still, men said to have been blessed with great minds, were invariably, if not always, diligent and persevering students. Read, for instance, the life of Luther, of Isaac Newton, of Chalmers, of Webster, and you will at once see that these men, and other great men, were untiring students all their life time. They did not gain knowledge intuitively. It was only by dint of severe mental labor that they were enabled to shine as stars of the first magnitude in the intellectual firmament. Were you to apply yourself to study as persistingly as they did, you might perhaps one day shine as brightly as they did. Or, if you should not be able to soar as high as they did, you may by being near the earth serve so much the better as guiding-star to others. Let no one be discouraged. As the mind by exercise may be improved and developed in-

definitely, a man of mediocrity of talents may by perseverance in study become distinguished for his knowledge. There is unquestionably a difference between the capacity of mind in different individuals; but whilst this is admitted, it is equally true that this difference is vastly more increased by the difference of application to study by different persons than is generally supposed. A mind in its normal state, though of middling capacity only, may by industry become great and leave its impress on the world of mankind. Hence, whilst he who fancies himself possessed of a more than ordinary mind, and foolishly reclines on this conceit in indolence, another one with less talents, and of course with less self-conceit, diligently improves the little he has, and unexpectedly, but most surely, eclipses the lazy *giant*. No block of marble is so refractory but that the free application of the chisel will give it shape and make it answer some good purpose. But the chisel must be applied no matter what the quality of the marble may be. In like manner, every one, whether he possesses great talents or not, must apply himself unreservedly to study if he would gain knowledge and become useful to others.

A man may be a *genius* in a particular thing and yet be very deficient in general knowledge. Like the boy FERGUSON, he may mark the position of the stars accurately with a thread and beads, and with his knife construct a watch from wood, and yet his attainments in other respects be very limited. Hence, whilst such instances of genius are very rare, they at the same time prove the absolute necessity of severe study in order to general knowledge. The genius must apply himself closely

if he would know anything that lies beyond the peculiar range of his mind; for while he excels in one thing, he is almost always deficient in other things. Besides, we must not forget, that as he has a natural bent of mind for one particular subject, it is to this, also, that he devotes all his time and study to the almost total exclusion of every other subject; and because he so concentrates all the powers of his mind on his favorite study he excels in that study. The genius studies too, and that most intensely; and it may be that he is a genius, because he studies only one subject thoroughly. See, with what unremitting patience and untiring perseverance he pursues his darling subject! What constant solicitude knits his brow, and the very mention of the subject he has in hand kindles enthusiasm in his eye. In his estimation no subject is worthy of attention, but the one that engrosses his mind, and this one he therefore studies until it assumes, in his view, a prominence and importance before which every thing else dwindles into insignificance. The genius is a close, but one-sided student. From his untiring application to the study of one subject, we may learn how necessary it is that we study if we would know. For if the mastering of one subject requires such intense and persistent effort on the part of a genius, how much greater must our efforts be, who are no geniuses, to master not only one subject, but to gain a general knowledge of things in general!

Knowledge is not gained by *transient or spasmodic* efforts. It is a common thing to find persons, who, on hearing or reading something, instantly lay hold of it with great eagerness; but when the novelty of their

pet subject has passed away, they as instantly dismiss it and catch at something else. Sometimes by a single lecture on phrenology or mesmerism, a whole community is started from its slumbers; for a short time every body will then study phrenology, and everywhere they will be engaged in feeling each other's heads, just as if they had now for the first time found out that they had heads. But as the excitement about their heads gradually subsides, the subject—phrenology—is dismissed from the mind, and no one is the wiser for having thought on it. Some there are who to day study theology, to morrow law, and probably the next day medicine; others for a few days study mathematics, and next week, tired of figures, they study geology, but as this requires more thought than they are willing to exercise, they study astronomy the week following. In this way men may study many things, and with all know very little, and that little will be superficial and detached. Thus, much money is often spent for books, much precious time is wasted, and still no progress in knowledge is made. A certain professional character, on being told that a knowledge of the Latin language was indispensable to a finished education, at once concluded to study that language, glorying in the idea of becoming a finished scholar in a short time. He was all in excitement on the subject; he must be a latinist at once. At considerable expense he bought a grammar, dictionary, and a number of the Latin classics. So far all was right and went easy enough. But as the grammar was the smallest volume in the lot, he laid that aside as of smallest value to him; and as the dic-

tionary was the largest of the books, he concluded to commence studying that, fully determined to commit every word it contained ; but as he knew nothing about the inflection of nouns and verbs, you may imagine his mortification, when, in attempting to read Latin, he could not find the words sought. He laid all the blame on the dictionary, declaring that it was a bad one. When he was told what course to pursue, in quick despair he laid all his Latin books on the shelf, and the money he so much needed was buried in the dust. Ah, how many would like to be learned, but how few like to labor for knowledge ! Knowledge comes not by way of fits and starts.

Nor is knowledge gained by *forced* measures or in *haste*. Some things admit of being forced on us, but knowledge is none of these. The mind must by its own energy develop from within outward, going forth in search of that which it would understand. The student must seek and pursue the subject, and not be pursued by the subject. There must be growth from within. Knowledge cannot be imposed as so many layers from without. If it could be so imposed it would be the easiest thing in the world to become learned, and the difference of aptitude to learn, observable in different minds, would not exist. But, on the contrary, there must be mental labor and activity in order to mental improvement. Hence, the teacher always seeks to have his pupil exercise his mind, and where this cannot be affected there can be no progress in knowledge. It is by exercise that the mind gains strength and acquires knowledge. This is, however, not the result of a day's

labor, but of close and constant application for years ; or, as Cæsar in fewer words would have expressed it, *Festina lente*, that is, study thoroughly as you proceed, and though your progress may seem to be slow, you will in the end find it to be the fastest and best way to get knowledge. The student, who is thorough in his preparation, forms habits of mind that will characterize him through life, and lays a foundation deep and broad for a glorious superstructure. The true student is his own teacher far more and in a far higher sense than his instructor can ever be. He has no disposition to walk with crutches under his arms when he has limbs of his own to support him. With him haste consists in thoroughness, and his thoroughness is the result of his patience and indomitable perseverance in study. He needs no stimulus to urge him forward, or hot-bed to hasten his growth upward. Aids he will use, not that they should raise him up, but that by them he may raise himself. And every round he makes upward will fill him with satisfaction and joy inexpressibly great. That for which he labored he may call his own, and he will value it as he cannot the labor of another. As the field of knowledge is open to one, so it is open to all, and all are invited to enter it and reap for eternity.

2. Having looked at the negative side of this subject, we will now consider its positive side. For whilst we have no hope of gaining knowledge by relying on anything that does not imply severe mental labor, we have at the same time the full and glorious assurance that proper efforts on our part will secure for us the much desired prize. The course to be pursued is a plain one, and one which lies open to all.

There must be *perseverance*. As in every thing else, so here if we would succeed we must press forward and upward. If there are difficulties in our way, we must have courage to labor, till they are removed or overcome. As by continued use the weak arm will become strong and things difficult easy, so it is with the mind. Go slowly if you cannot run, and you will gather strength until you can run. Only yield to no difficulty. The day of small things is not to be despised. Let the ancient proverb be your motto: *Nulla dies sine linea*. Let not a day pass without acquiring some knowledge. The process may seem to be a slow one, but it is all the better and surer for that. Great results are generally the offspring of slow, hard and long-continued efforts. In composing *The Analogy of Religion*, a comparatively small book, Joseph Butler was engaged during a period of twenty years, writing and re-writing different parts of it, studying every word and phrase, until it expressed precisely his meaning and no more. Here was perseverance. As the result of this labor for so many years, few books, if any in our language, contain more in less space and few are to be read with greater profit than Butler's Analogy. That which costs us little is usually worth little. This is true especially of knowledge. Some minds move and act slowly at first; but by perseverance in study, they may gradually move promptly and display great energy. The apparently weak intellect may become strong, and the dull may become bright. The unwrought diamond may be dim, but when polished it is transparent as water. The slower and harder it is to polish the mind, the more solid

and clear it may become. Let no one be discouraged after having made one, two, or even a score of unsuccessful efforts. In translating the Bible into German, Luther and his learned coadjutors sometimes spent two, three, and even four weeks, in ascertaining the true meaning and giving a correct rendering of a single word. * Than this, perhaps, no better example of patient perseverance can be given to encourage those who meet with difficulties in their path-way to knowledge, and especially those who encounter difficulties in the study of the languages. Having before us such an example of perseverance on the part of men so eminently gifted, who of us need now despair? I say, then, cling to your subject, pursue it on every line, view it on every side, until you can look all around it, see through it, master it, triumph over it, and reap the bliss your victory yields. What others did you may do. There is no height to which you may not ascend, and there is no depth to which you may not dive. What at first was dark will gradually melt into light, what was hard will become easy, and what was intricate will become simple. To persevere is to bear away the crown.

Study *one* thing at a time, and dismiss it not until you are master of it. Study things, not books. One subject well understood is a great attainment. Bring all the powers of the mind to bear on one point, until you have a clear view of all its surroundings, and then you may congratulate yourself that you know at least one thing. Be exact and careful in all your studies, always doing your utmost. Attend to small things, and

* Luther's German Works: *Erlangen Ed.*, Vol 65. p 109.

continually seek for errors and correct them. Criticise your own performances or productions severely. Be negligent in nothing—be on your guard in every thing. Spare no labor to attain the highest degree of excellence. Demosthenes is said to have transcribed the literary productions of Thucydides eight times over with his own hand, so diligently did he persevere to form an intimate acquaintance with his style, and habituate himself to his quick manner of conception, and to his close and rapid delivery. Here was perseverance to attain a great degree of excellence. I need not tell you who and what Demosthenes was, except this, that it was by hard labor and unbending perseverance that he was made a great orator. All his efforts were directed to the gaining of one thing, and he succeeded pre-eminently. If we cannot excel in every thing, we may by close application and perseverance excel at least in one thing. If you cannot master many subjects, then be *Homo unius libri*, and thus, by knowing one subject thoroughly, you will have gained a prominent position. But by mastering one subject, we prepare the way to successfully master other subjects. One step gives us motive force enough to take another, until we find pleasure and not labor, in the act of walking. Thus, by diligently improving the little we have, we shall receive more, and in this way our store of knowledge will gradually accumulate, and instead of knowing little we shall know a great deal. Let the man of one book take courage.

By studying one subject at a time, we shall be able more fully to fix and concentrate our minds, and our investigation of any given subject will be so much the

more thorough. But to study slowly and thoroughly, a large share of *patience* is required. If a man can not take time to study a subject well, he lacks one of the chief elements of a good student, and will accomplish nothing that is of any value to others, or that will live after he is dead. Patient perseverance is absolutely necessary to the acquisition of knowledge. On his Bridgewater Treatise, on *Geology and Mineralogy*, Dr. Buckland is said to have bestowed unusual pains. He re-wrote it repeatedly, and re-copied it as many as *seventeen* times. What patience was required here! What labor, intense labor, continued through many years, was bestowed on one subject! And what was the result?—So fully, accurately, and thoroughly did he study his subject, that his Treatise has always been the most popular of the incomparable Bridgewater series. With such an example of indefatigable labor, patience and perseverance, before us, no one should complain if he fails after having made only a few attempts. Let him concentrate all the powers of his mind on one subject for a score of years, exercise his thoughts and patience to the utmost, seek for light in every direction and follow every opening avenue for information, and if he does not succeed in gaining knowledge, then he may justly complain and despair too. His mind is of a peculiar cast.

As long as we live we should seek to add something, every day, to our store of knowledge. There is scarcely an object or circumstance, not a person or book, from which we may not learn something we did not know before. The world is a great book, spreading out to

our inspection its ample folds, and without cost teaching us wisdom on every page. He that has eyes may here read, and he that has understanding may here learn. Close observation united with reflection will furnish us with many useful lessons, not to be learned in any other way. Thus, that invaluable little book, *The improvement of the mind*, contains the substance of what Mr. Watts saw, heard, read, and observed among mankind, during a period of twenty years. We all enjoy the same facilities for observation he did, and all may gather for themselves an abundant harvest of useful knowledge. When the habit of close observation is once formed, the mind will be constantly upon the alert, anxiously scanning every passing object or event, every person, action or expression, seeking to gain knowledge, enjoyment, or warning from all. If a man will but think, he can by observation learn more that is truly valuable than many books can teach him. He is his own teacher, original in his ideas, and always alive to the beauties of nature. Every day will furnish him with new subjects for thought, and if his is an inquiring mind a thousand questions will suggest themselves for solution. All nature, spread at his feet, invites his attention and challenges his inspection and admiration. The leaflet that trembles in the breeze, the insect that floats in the sun-beam,—from the smallest to the greatest, above and around him—everywhere and in every thing, he sees or hears something from which he may gain knowledge. Study, then, the book of nature,—study always, and you will not be without knowledge. I do not say book-knowledge; for if you truly seek knowledge, you will

use every aid in your reach, comparing your observation with what you read, or verifying and enlarging on that which others studied before you. Happy is he who can make every thing subservient to his mental improvement. The more he knows the more he wants to know, and the more he will know.

If we would advance in knowledge there must, on our part, be *independent* exercise of mind. By this we do not mean that the advice, opinion, or instruction of our superiors is to be set aside. This would be arrogant and presumptuous, and would cut off one of the very means by which we are to attain knowledge. Our meaning is, that whilst we avail ourselves of every aid in our reach, we must try to aid ourselves by our own efforts. He who always depends on others, and has no mind of his own, will never make a scholar; he will always falter and limp, and can never stand erect. He has no confidence in himself and never can have. He knows and retails only what others know, and knows nothing that they did not know before. Popular opinion is the rule according to which he forms his opinion. In short, he is at best only an imitator or a copyist. By pursuing such a course a man does injustice to himself; he does injury to his mind, as its energies are not brought into action. Slavish dependence on others must therefore be avoided as the deadliest enemy to mental improvement. It is the duty of every man to think, and so to think as to be able intelligently to adopt or reject whatever may be taught or propounded by others. We must study to understand a subject before we presume to pronounce an opinion respecting it. Hence, in all

the affairs of life, if we would not fall into gross errors, we must think. And we are often placed in such circumstances where no one can think for us. In all we read or hear, do or see done, we must think if we would make progress in knowledge. In our studies, in our intercourse with men, everywhere and at all times, let the mind be busy, reason out if possible every difficulty, account if it can for every phenomenon in nature, trace effects to their causes and seek the causes for effects, study the principles on which things are done and on which results depend, search out the reason for things, and in every way seek to improve the mind and store it with knowledge both by the failings and successes of others. Work your own mental powers, and depend not too much on others to do the work for you; for if they do your thinking they will be the gainers and you the loser. Every question the teacher solves for the pupil, or every sentence he translates for him, is so much of a loss to the mental improvement of the pupil. As much as lies in you do your own thinking, and by so doing you will gain vigor, strength and independence of mind, and reap a glorious harvest in the great progress you will make in the acquisition of knowledge.

But whilst we would urge you to think for yourself, we would not have you forget that on your part great *self-denial* and *humility* must be exercised. To study hard is to labor hard. And without the exercise of self-denial no one need hope to make much progress in his studies. If we would know much, we must be willing to endure severe toil as long as we live. The flesh and vanities of the world must all be denied; the roving

mind must be collected and brought under the discipline of an all-controlling will; and all the powers of the soul must bend to our subject, clinch it, and grapple with it, until we are master of it. This may all seem to be hard; and so it is; but there is "not a bitter that has not its sweet." Delight and satisfaction at our success in labor will out-weigh by far all the pain this labor gives. The harder and the more compact the rock the smoother and brighter the polish. To gain knowledge, who would not labor for it? And laboring for it, who is there that does not gain it? And gaining it, who would part with it for all the world can give? Part with it! no, knowledge gained in time is gained for eternity! It is inalienable; it is an element of the soul, and lives immortal with the immortal soul. But whilst knowledge wings the soul, it also clothes it with *humility*. And herein consists the real beauty of knowing much. Though Sir Isaac Newton was the discoverer of the nature of light and color, of fluxions, of the laws of gravitation, and unfolded to the world the theory of the universe, yet with deep humility he said, "I seem to myself to be like a child, picking up a shell here and there, on the shore of the great ocean of truth." The more we know, the more clearly will we see that we know so little, and this will humble us; but to know how little we know is a great attainment, and the sure mark of a truly great mind. Few are so ignorant but might tell even a great scholar some things he did not know before. Hence, in all your studies be humble, lest an unpretending chimney-sweeper humble you in a way and under circumstances you would very much dislike.

In truth, a man of education cannot but be humble in view of his ignorance of so many things. And whenever you meet a man who prides himself in his supposed great knowledge, you need not fear him, for he has not yet learned to know that he knows so little. Never think yourself so wise that you would not stoop to learn of a beggar by the way-side, and never vaunt over ignorance, for the simple reason that you will always be ignorant enough to learn of the ignorant. The more you know, the more will you see that is to be known. The higher you rise, the more extended will the area of your mental vision become, until the heavens above you are all tremulous with roseate glory, shedding their sweet influences down ; but beyond all conception deep and far shine the bright stars, and their solemn depths speak forth the awe and lesson of their mystery, only too vast and sublime for the finite mind to comprehend. In deep humility we must close our eyes and bow our head, crying out, "Great is the Lord God Almighty, and his works by searching who can understand !"

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." An eye to God must both quicken and direct all our pursuits of knowledge. Without the fear and love of God in the heart, a man may know much, and yet be very ignorant of himself and the glories of which the earth is full. If piety is necessary to make an orator, much more is it necessary to him who would gain and appreciate knowledge. In all your studies, seek to know yourself, your frailty and ignorance, your sins of omission and commission, the depravity and wickedness of your heart, and the blindness of your reason and the

perversity of your judgment. He only is a real student who seeks in the blood of Jesus a cure for his heart and in the teachings of the Bible a cure for his head. Heartily study with a sincere desire to glorify God with your knowledge and to benefit your fellow-men. As you have many obstacles to encounter in the pursuit of knowledge, look to God in fervent, believing prayer for assistance. The Holy Scriptures encourage you to do so. Says James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Here is your warrant for prayer to God for light and wisdom. The experience of LUTHER on this point was not limited, and he says: "*Bene orasse est bene studuisse.*" Religion exalts the mind and moves the affections, brings us in communion with the great God, the fountain of all wisdom, and sheds a halo of unsullied glory on our pathway through life. Prayer is a help to study. Pious Doddridge says, "that he never advanced well in human learning without prayer, and that he always made the most proficiency in his studies when he prayed with the greatest fervency." This is the testimony of all good and great men. Daily study your Bibles and daily pray to God for guidance, light and wisdom, and you will find study a pleasure and knowledge a crown of glory.

3. Although great self-denial and incessant toil for years are required to gain knowledge, still we would have no one shrink or be discouraged from entering the arena and do his utmost to win the crown. And there is a crown in reserve for every one who will make the

proper exertion. There are weighty reasons why each one should resolve by the aid of God to rise as high as possible in the scale of intellectual being. The soul immortal, possessed of unbounded aspirations, cannot be chained down or be satisfied with knowing little or nothing when there is so much to be known. By giving us these aspirations, we may be sure that our Creator designed that they should be gratified in the use of the proper means.

Knowledge *may be ours*, and therefore we should seek it at every sacrifice. Say not that you labor under insuperable difficulties,—that you are without means and possess only an ordinary mind. If you have but one talent, improve that faithfully and you shall have more. Think not of your disadvantages or of the advantages of others, but think of your own great advantages. Think of the many good books you may obtain to aid you, of the many precious hours you may save for study of the many opportunities you have in untold ways to gain information, and of the many calls and incentives to study and improve your mind. Rise above your disadvantages by causing them to turn to your advantage,—by making them serve as so many incentives to study. Be sure to make everything subservient to your mental improvement. And though your efforts should not at once be crowned with the highest results, be not disheartened,—only persevere, you may yet succeed far beyond your most sanguine expectations. Advancement in knowledge is usually so gradual as to be perceived least by him who makes it. Hence, if you have to slowly remove stone after stone in your way climbing

upward; be it so. You need not regret this. You know that you are gaining at least some ground, and this ought to be enough to stimulate you to continue to labor with so much greater zeal. And if you do so, your path will gradually shift its course in your favor, and labor will become easier as you become stronger. The higher you ascend, the brighter your sky will become and the further you will be able to see. You are surely gaining ground. One difficulty after another vanishes like fog before the rising sun, and you begin to breathe more freely and to taste the first fruits of your toil in the satisfaction your success affords you. If the little progress you have made gives you such exquisite delight, what unspeakable rapture must fill your soul, when, after many years' labor, you shall stand high up and gather into your bosom streams of light and knowledge! The harder you toil and the higher you ascend, the more glorious will your prospect become and the sweeter and more abundant your reward. If you are feeble now and cannot do much, then do a little every day. For a little gold, if it is not as heavy, is as bright as much, and a little flower may be more beautiful and redolent than a large one. Variety is one of God's ways. As one star differs from another in glory, and their various rays melt and blend in sweet harmony in the field of space to light up the heavens; so each mind, differing from each, may in the field of knowledge shed its influence in unison with all others to swell the glorious orchestra of the universe of mind. The little mind can twinkle and shine as well as the little star. Who would be blind in mid-day, when God has given him

eyes to see? Study, then, and seek knowledge, see, rejoice, and shine forever.

Not only does knowledge yield its possessor inexpressible satisfaction, but it also *elevates* and *ennobles* the mind. And who would not wish and labor hard to rise in the intellectual world, and thus prove, maintain and vindicate, his superiority of excellence over the lower orders of creation? God made man in his own image, and crowned him with glory and honor. He stands only a little lower than the angels; and I am not sure but he may through Jesus Christ stand beside or even above angels. And shall a being so exquisitely formed, and formed for ends so high, ignore his exalted character and bury his crown in the dust? No; surely every one will instinctively spring to his feet and lay claim to the dignity and exalted position he holds as man. Noble creature! compound of spirit immortal and of the dust of earth. God has endowed him with a memory tenacious and a mind inquisitive, ever active, ever seeking and never finding its bound, ever storing and never stored with knowledge, ever desiring and never satisfied, ever flying on wings of light from world to world and yet never from home, always toiling and always weary and yet always striving to mount higher and higher to reach the center of bliss and rest in God. Possessed of such inherent powers and aspirations so lofty, does the mind not deserve to be winged with knowledge to aid it in its upward flight? and does not our position as lords of this sublunary world, and our intimate relation to God as the Father of our spirits, imperatively demand that we rise high above the low level of fogs and clouds

and darkness? Goodness and knowledge are the elements of man's true greatness. Be the possessor of both, and you will be noble in your humility and humble in your nobility of soul.

Knowledge enables us to do *good* and *glorify* God, and therefore we should seek it. Knowledge is power. Hence the influence which the educated man exerts on the uneducated. As certainly as the planets are drawn by the sun, and the moons by their planets, so certainly do men of great knowledge draw those who are less informed. A man may be pious, but if he is ignorant, he can do little good; but if he is both pious and educated he will have influence and may be the honored instrument of doing much good to many, and thus he glorifies God with his knowledge. As we can do good and glorify God by our knowledge, it is clearly our duty to strive to know as much as lies in our power. Not only is it the duty of the minister of the gospel to study in order to increase his usefulness, but it is every Christian's sacred duty to improve his mind for the sake of doing others good. It is a sin of omission for any one to hide or neglect the talent or talents his Master has given him. The obligation to do our utmost to gain knowledge is binding on all. To study in order to increase our usefulness, is a duty we owe our God, ourselves and our fellow-men, and no one, who willfully or for the sake of ease neglects or refuses to discharge this duty, will be held guiltless at the great day of account. The slothful servant will be bound and "cast into outer darkness." No one can excuse himself. If you have not ten talents, you may have five; and if you have not five, you have

at least one,—improve that one faithfully, and you shall have more. But if you will not improve the little you have, you prove yourself unworthy of more, and what you have shall be taken from you, because you are a “wicked and unprofitable servant.” To study is a duty as imperative as any other, and neglect to perform it involves the glory of God and perils our souls and the souls of others. I would have every one warned and take warning on this subject. There are some, yea many, of whom better things ought to be reasonably expected, who consider themselves absolved from attending to this duty. They seem to think it well enough that certain classes should know something; but as for themselves, they consider it unnecessary, that they should condescend to such drudgery. Very well; if you will not labor to increase the number of your talents—if you will not study to bless your fellow-men and glorify God—you must not think that the Lord is a cruel Master, if he disinherits you and commands you to be bound and cast into outer darkness. Jesus Christ says: “He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.”

Finally, what we learn in time we learn for eternity, and therefore we should now study to increase our knowledge to the utmost of our power. It is the opinion of many metaphysicians that nothing of what we here know will be wholly forgotten in the eternal world, and that every idea we have ever had, though forgotten now, is so impressed upon the soul and locked up in its inner recesses, as to survive time, and will in the day of eternity stand in full view before us. This opinion

seems to be sustained by the holy Scriptures and well authenticated facts. How careful we should be to study and read nothing that is impure, and to entertain no thought that we would not wish to revive on our sick bed, or in our dying hour, or confront us at the judgment-bar ! *) But think we must; the soul cannot be wholly inactive; it is a living principle. Only let us be careful to think aright on right subjects, and then we will lay up treasures in Heaven. Your labor to gain knowledge is not

* If not a thought or idea we have ever had be ever wholly lost, with what care should parents and others act and speak in the presence of children, whose minds, like an open soil, are so susceptible of deep and abiding impressions ! and what constant diligence should they exercise that children neither hear nor see, read or in company learn any thing that may vitiate their minds by corrupt ideas ! The tree is in the bud. A handful of sand will turn the course of a rivulet, whilst a rushing stream will sweep all away before it. So one unfortunate idea may turn the whole of life into a course of iniquity, which, unarrested in time, will rush on in the soul's being through all eternity. Is this not one reason, not to mention others, why God so solemnly and repeatedly charges parents to continually teach and keep the minds of their children occupied and engaged in the study of the pure lofty, holy, and eternal truths of the Bible ? See Deut. 6: 1-9. The forming process is still going on and the impressions the mind receives will characterize it, and determine its condition in the eternal world. No parent can be indifferent as to who instructs his child at school, or as to what mental food it receives. Far better no ideas than bad ones. Adults, also, receive these impressions and their minds are yielding to them. To be convinced of this, we need but observe how readily members of a congregation will imitate in their prayers the phraseology the pastor uses in his prayers, so that it is not difficult, in some cases, to tell under whose ministry a man received his training or to what denomination he belongs. Hence, it cannot be a matter of indifference who our spiritual teacher is or to what denomination we belong—that teaching and mode of worship which are more consonant to heaven, and are therefore eternal, must be preferred. If then, as we suppose, ideas or thoughts are indestructible, how great is the responsibility of ministers of the gospel, of parents and teachers, of editors and writers of books, &c., and with what prayerful diligence should they seek to say or do, teach or publish, nothing that they would not wish

lost, and will not be buried with your body in the dust. Every correct idea you gain and every progress you make in true knowledge in time, is so much progress made and knowledge gained for eternity. This thought, how appalling to the wicked ! how encouraging to the righteous ! If you are a child of God, take courage and study on. You are climbing heaven-ward. Exhaust your time and improve your mind so as to stand on vantage-ground in eternity. Your progress here is so much progress there. So much correct information gained on earth, is so much gained for heaven. It cannot be that all knowledge gained here should be obliterated there. Shall we know Jesus here, and shall we not know him there ? Yes, thank God, we shall know him, and see him too ! Shall we know our friends on earth, and shall we cease to know them in heaven, or shall we know less there than here ? We shall know them. And so of all correct knowledge acquired in time. Truth is eternal, and the same in heaven and on earth ; hence what of truth we know here we will know there, except only that, in the transition, the imperfect will give place to the perfect and the incorrect to the correct. Further : we shall not only know there what we know here, but as the soul is susceptible of indefinite and constant progress in knowledge here, may it not

to reappear in their own minds or in the minds of others at the bar of God and live on for ever in themselves or others a worm that never dies. In this note our object is to merely suggest some few obvious inferences deducible from the proposition we lay down, viz., that what we learn in time we learn for eternity. It does not comport with our design at present to discuss that proposition. The intelligent hearer can himself easily enlarge on it. It is a fruitful and awfully important subject.

progress from eternity to eternity in gaining knowledge there? Does an infant in glory always remain an infant in knowledge? If there is a limit beyond which the soul can gain knowledge no more, there its aspirations must cease and its flow of happiness is arrested. But such a limit cannot be in heaven. Hence, the soul in glory will rise higher in bliss in proportion as its knowledge increases. We on earth can rejoice alone in what we know, and not in what we know not. Now, if amid all our infirmities of body, of imperfections and obstructions, the immortal soul struggles upward and soars aloft as on eagles' wings to gather rich treasures of knowledge, and is happy in proportion to the amount of that knowledge, how inexpressibly great must its progress in knowledge and happiness be, when released from this cumbrous clay and removed from all imperfection, it has gained its native heaven, and in the full blaze of eternal day, hard by the throne of God, looks deep into the mysteries of divine grace, surveys the wonders of redeeming love, exults in the displays of God's power and the manifestations of his wisdom, adores as scene after scene passes in the revolving ages of eternity—passes not so fast as to confuse nor so slow as to tire, always new and always varied, profound and vast and yet simple and easily understood—all understood by the soul, which is not a spectator merely, but a receiver and a reflector of the glory of God and of heaven, infinitely blessed and always blessing and praising the great God, of whose kingdom there is no end, with the host of heaven crying, *Hallelujah*, the Lord reigneth! The great progress which

the soul makes forever in knowledge in the world of glory must be one of the chief sources of its happiness ; and as that progress has no limits, so its happiness has none. With these high motives before him, let each one persevere in study and thus gain for himself a high position on earth and a bright crown in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



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